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REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY WAYS TO EXPAND REFERRALS BY MEDICAL PERSONNEL FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES EARLIER IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD.

WHEREAS, children with developmental disabilities have substantial functional limitations related to a mental or physical impairment, including brain trauma; and

WHEREAS, early intervention services for developmentally disabled children are needed from the moment of birth; and

WHEREAS, the earlier children are identified as developmentally disabled and begin receiving services, the more likely they are to be able to live independent and self-directed lives; and

WHEREAS, families of developmentally disabled children are often overburdened and lack the knowledge and resources to provide optimal care for these children; and

WHEREAS, the department of health operates a program of early intervention services called CAREarly; and

WHEREAS, medical professionals often do not identify developmental disabilities early enough in the child's life to make a timely referral to this program; and

WHEREAS, earliest referral for these children means maximizing the opportunities for growth and development of the child;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to create a task force to study ways to expand referrals by medical personnel for early intervention services earlier in the life of the child; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this task force include representation from advocate groups, providers and parents of developmentally disabled children, as well as appropriate medical personnel; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings of this task force be reported to

1 the legislative health and human services committee by its October 2003 meeting; and
2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the
3 secretary of health, statewide medical and pediatric associations, developmental
4 disabilities advocacy groups and the interim legislative health and human services
5 committee.

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